

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES BY-LAWS

Article I – Authority and Statement of Purpose

1. Authority: The authority for the Board of Veterans Services is found in § 2.2-2452 of the Code of Virginia (the Code).
2. Statement of Purpose: The Board of Veterans Services (the Board) is a policy board within the meaning of § 2.2-2100, in the executive branch of state government. The Board is responsible for monitoring the welfare of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and setting policies to enhance veteran services across the Commonwealth.

Article II – Membership

1. Composition and Appointment of Members: The Board consists of 26 members, including seven legislative members, 15 nonlegislative citizen members and four *ex officio* members. Three members from the Senate are appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. Four members from the House of Delegates are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates. Nonlegislative members are appointed by the Governor. The Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS), the Chairman of the Veterans Services Foundation, Chairman of the War Memorial Foundation Board, and the Chairman of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations serve *ex officio*.
2. Terms: Legislative members, the DVS Commissioner, the JLC Chairman, and the VSF Chairman serve Board terms coincide with their terms of office. Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, are for the unexpired terms. All members may be reappointed. However, no House member can serve more than six consecutive two-year terms, no Senate member can serve more than three consecutive four-year terms. Non-legislative citizen members appointed to serve an unexpired term is eligible to serve two consecutive four-year terms immediately succeeding such unexpired term.
3. Qualifications: Board members are appointed for the expertise they have regarding the various service lines and programs administered by DVS. This should include at least one board member with experience in best practices in each of the following: benefits claim service; budgets and strategic planning; cemetery operations; education; employment, training, and entrepreneurship, medical and health care management; mental and behavioral health, justice involved veterans and the legal system.

Article III – Officers

1. General: DVS shall provide staff to assist the Board in their administrative, planning and procedural duties.

The Board will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from its membership. The DVS Commissioner is not eligible to serve as Chair.

2. Primary Duties of the Chair: Preside over all meetings and perform the duties required before, during and after to ensure a smooth, well-run meeting. The Chair will serve as an *ex officio* member of the Veterans Services Foundation (with voting privileges), the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (with no voting privileges), and the Virginia War Memorial Board (with voting privileges). The Chair may designate a Board member to represent him/her at these meetings. The Chair shall appoint work groups, as needed, and in such a way as to allow the Board to fulfill its' powers and duties.
3. Additional Duties of the Chair: The Chair shall work closely with DVS staff and Board members on pre-meeting planning and preparations. Shall maintain communication with the Commissioner, and other DVS staff, on all budget, policy and strategic planning initiatives put forward by the Board. Shall meet with legislators, as needed, and represent the Board before the Virginia General Assembly. Shall coordinate with the DVS Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Director of Policy and Planning on long-term strategic planning and budgetary issues to maintain strong programs and services within DVS for Virginia's veterans. Shall maintain communication with each Board member and assign projects and duties as needed. Upon request of the Commissioner, the Chair shall write letters to communicate policy and budget initiatives affecting DVS and Virginia's veterans to legislators.
4. Primary Duties of the Vice Chair: In the absence of the Chair, preside at Board meetings; perform duties as assigned by the Chair; assume the responsibilities of the Chair in the event the Chair can no longer fulfill them; and assume the role of Chair for the remainder of the elected Chair's term, if necessary.
5. Term of Service: The Chair and Vice-Chair will serve a two-year term of office. The Chair and Vice-Chair are eligible for re-election, but can serve no more than two consecutive terms. In the event the office of Chair or Vice-Chair is vacated prior to the scheduled completion of that officer's term of office, a Chair or Vice-Chair shall be elected to serve the remainder of the term of office, in which case an election to fill an unexpired term greater than one year shall count as one term toward the two consecutive term limit.
6. Elections: Candidates for office may either put their own name forward, or may be nominated by another member. Nominations will be made to the Chair, verbally or in writing, so that the nominees can be conveyed to the full Board at least 14 days prior to the meeting when elections will be held. Elections will be by voice vote during the first regularly scheduled meeting following July 1.

Article IV – Powers and Duties of Board

1. Advise the DVS Commissioner upon such matters as may arise in the performance of his/her duties.
2. Advise the DVS Commissioner upon such matters as may arise, upon request of the Commissioner of Veterans Services, or the Governor, related to the provision of care and services to veterans.
3. Advise the DVS Commissioner upon such matters as may arise affecting the welfare of Virginia citizens who are veterans or dependents or survivors of such veterans.
4. Review policies related to the coordinated delivery of veterans services and develop recommendations for policies and procedures related to the efficient and effective delivery of services provided by DVS.
5. Review and advise the DVS Commissioner on the Department's strategic plan and annual report.
6. Provide recommendations to DVS regarding the acquisition of facilities that may benefit the Commonwealth's veterans, including, but not limited to, veterans cemeteries and veterans care centers.

Article V – Work Groups

1. The Board shall organize itself in such a way as to allow it to fulfill its powers and duties, including work groups, created at the discretion of the Chair.
2. Work groups, on behalf of the entire Board, will perform detailed analytical and investigative work on a specific issue. Work groups will be formed only to deal with policy or procedural issues related the DVS service lines; policy initiatives regarding veterans; researching programs and initiatives currently in place in other states and the possibility of pursuing and implementing similar programs in Virginia; or other projects as requested by the Board Chair and/or DVS Commissioner.
3. Work groups shall form upon the call and discretion of the Chair, and complete their work within 12 consecutive months from the time the Chair nominates and the Board members approve the formation and membership of the work group. Committee members will be selected for their subject matter expertise. The Chair shall name a Committee Chair and at least two additional members. The work group shall work with DVS staff to compile a final report, which they will present to the Chair and Commissioner, and then present to the Board at the first regularly scheduled meeting following the completion of their work.
4. Any Board member may make a request for a work group to the Board Chair.

Article VI – Service Line Points of Contact (POCs)

1. The Chair shall appoint Points of Contact (POC) from the membership of the Board with the specific qualifications and experience to best serve each of the DVS Service Line Directors, providing support in developing effective policy recommendations related to the services provided to Virginia's veterans.
2. Each POC shall provide oversight, counsel and develop recommendations for the Service Line Director and Commissioner on the administration, organization, fiscal operation, expansion and policies for the function of the service line, procedures to ensure compliance with all state and federal requirements, and when applicable, assist in the development of professional competency testing and performance reviews to ensure the highest quality of expertise.
3. When applicable, POCs shall ensure that all relevant policies and hiring and training practices are followed through on by the Director, and Supervisors, if relevant.
4. For Service Line Directors with more than two POCs, all work and meetings shall be in compliance with FOIA and other state regulations regarding Virginia Boards and Commissions.
5. Each POC shall be available to the DVS staff and Commissioner for assistance with the annual review of the operational, financial and organizational policies.
6. The Service Line POCs shall be:
 - Benefits Services
 - Behavioral Health & Housing
 - Cemeteries
 - Communications
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Legal & Criminal Justice
 - Policy & Budget
 - Strategic Planning
 - Veterans Care Centers

Article VII – Meetings and Compensation

1. Meetings: The Board will meet at least three times a year, or on the call of the Chair.
2. Attendance: Board members shall attend all or the majority of meetings in each year. If a member is unable to attend due to an emergency or personal matter and identifies with specificity the nature of the emergency or personal matter to the Chair within 3 days of the meeting, the member shall be allowed to attend the meeting remotely, following all procedures and guidelines laid out in the Code of Virginia, Chapter 37 – Freedom of

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Information Act (FOIA) § 2.2-3708.1 “Participation in meetings in event of emergency or personal matter; certain disabilities; distance from meeting location for certain public bodies.” A copy of the code section is in the member handbook distributed to each member upon appointment to the board. It is the responsibility of each member to read, understand and follow the procedures.

3. Compensation and Reimbursement of Expenses: Board members shall be reimbursed for expenses and compensated for Board service as provided for in the Code of Virginia and the current Appropriations Act.

Article VIII –Miscellaneous

1. Quorum: A majority of the voting members of the Board constitutes a quorum.
2. Adoption and Amendment of Bylaws: These Bylaws can be amended by a two-thirds vote cast from voting Board members, if prior notice of the vote has been given.
3. Parliamentary Authority: The adopted parliamentary authority for Board meetings is the current version of Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised.